Involvement of foreign diplomats in smuggling activities

3512. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a newsitem which appeared in the Times of India (New Delhi) of the 25th December, 1988 under the caption 'Caution urged in duty exemption to envoys' wherein it was stated that several diplomats belonging to foreign countries based in Delhi are involved in smuggling activities;

(b) if so, what are the details of the diplomats found involved in smuggling activities; and

(c) what action has been taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) There have been only a few cases where discrepancies were noticed in the items declard and the items actually imported by diplomats. In such cases, stern action including confiscation of contraband goods and asking the offending diplomat to leave the country has been taken. The details of the diplomats against whom such action has been taken during 1988 are given below:

S. No.	Date and Place of seizure	Name of the diplomat and Embassy	Action taken
1.	17-2-1988, Terminal-II Cargo Complex, Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi.	Mr. Sameuddin, First Secretary, Embassy of Afghanistan.	The Mission was asked to withdraw the diplomat.
2.	30-9-1988, Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi.	Mr. Ibrahim O. Hamed, Attache Embassy of Iraq, New Delhi.	Has left India.
3.	30-9-1988, Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi.	Mr. Mohammad A. Attaallah, Attache Embassy of Iraq, New Delhi.	Has left India.
4.	18-11-1988, 201, Sainik Forms, New Delhi.	Mr. Rudolf F. Kolaco, Ambassador of Liberia, New Delhi.	He is understood to be out of India. Liberian Government has assured that he will be recalled.
5.	20-12-1988, Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi.	Mr. George P. Masah, Second Secretary, Embassy of Liberia, New Delhi.	Has left India.

Bank advances to subscribe to right issues

3513. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether commercial banks have initiated any scheme to give advances to investors wishing to subscribe to right issues; and

(b) if so, what are the salient features of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of ndia have reported that while instructions have been issued

to banks for assisting employees in acquiring shares of their employer companies out of the quota reserved for subscription by employees, no separate instructions have been issued by them for granting advances to investors in general proposing to subscribe to right shares.

Export price of cotton

3514. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the minimum export price in respect of export of cotton still continues or the same has since been withdrawn;

(b) whether any relaxation has been announced in the export procedure; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAFIQUE ALAM): (a) to (c) The procedure for *interse* allocation of the export quota released to the private trade has been revised so that interse allocations are made on the basis of the highest unit value realisation quoted by the applicants in their applications submitted in sealed tenders. In view of the above procedure, the fixation of minimum export prices in respect of quotas allotted to the private trade has been dispensed with. Exports by public sector agencies, however, will continue to be subject to minimum export prices.

Advances made under the Differential Rates of Interest Scheme

3515. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the total advances made under the Differential Rates of Interest Scheme so far; and

(b) how much of this is at four percent interest rate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Reserve Bank of India has reported that the total outstanding advances of public sector banks as at the end of December, 1988 under Differential Rate of Interest Scheme were Rs. 646.58 crores.

(b) The entire amount advanced under the scheme carries a rate of interest of 4 per cent annum.

Development of Wasteland

3516. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total wasteland in the country at present;

(b) what is the area of wasteland under the National Wastelands Development Board;

(c) whether the private sector is allowed to develop wasteland; and

(d) if so, the broad policy and the incentives available to the private sector for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) A country-wide survey of all wastelands has not been carried out. According to an estimate, the total area of wastelands in the country is about 130 million hectares.

(b) The National Wastelands Development Board does not have any wastelands of its own.

(c) and (d) The specific steps taken to encourage the private sector in wastelands development through afforestation and tree planting are given below:

(i) To promote farm/agro-forestry on privately owned wastelands, free or subsidised supply of seedlings is being done and decentralised people's nurseries are being established. Loans at uniform rate of 10 per cent per annum are given by the banks, and 100 per cent refinance facility is provided to the banks by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.